

PASSION WEEK – “THE GATHERING STORM”

“WHY THE KING MUST COME”

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Reflecting on His Work and the Storyline of the Bible

Read: Mark 11:1-11

Prayer:

Almighty and ever-living God, who, of your tender love towards mankind, has sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should [see and savor Him]: Mercifully grant that we may both follow [Him], and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. <http://www.bcponline.org/>

Everything we have considered thus far in the unfolding of God’s Story takes a macro-view by presenting the story’s primary peaks. Now we enter into the micro-view of the Story. This is the unassailable Mountain of God’s mystery. It is bathed in mercy and grace yet clothed in the garment of God’s justice. Protocol demands silence. We speak in hushed tones and bow our heads in shamed reckoning. We are wrong; God is right. Yet we continue to cry out for blood. It is our voices mixed with that of the crowd. We join in hoping to be heard and fed and served. Oh may we fully joy only after having tasted and seen the unfolding and fulfilled drama of His Passion. Let us consider Jesus Christ as the One, the Messiah, the King of kings and Lord of lords, and let us wholly sense the call to either accept Him for who He is, or reject Him, but let us shun neutrality. Our week begins with what is now called “Palm Sunday”.

Throughout the Story written by God there are descriptive words employed concerning the One who is to come. Such words are used to paint for the reader an image of what the coming One will look like and how He will function. Isaiah speaks of the One in the following way.

⁶“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this” (Isa. 9:6, 7).

The language is political. The coming One is a Prince, a King who institutes an administration and government. He upholds justice and executes His rule in righteousness. For millennia this word and hope generated by such promises and pictures enabled and empowered the audience to endure. Now in fulfillment of such promises, comes the One. His name is Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary. All that He is stands in direct contrast to and in conflict with the present powers both political and religious. Mark has carefully lain before the reader the clear claim of the one of whom he writes. Listen as a picture of contrast is painted for us by reliving those historical moments.

Continued on the other side...

“According to recent scholarship [by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan in their book *The Last Week*], on this day Pontius Pilate also rode into Jerusalem. With a vast host of chariots, cavalry, foot soldiers, clanking armor, and gleaming weapons, Pilate had his own parade almost two thousand years ago.

And he did so for two reasons. For one, Pilate did not live in Jerusalem. While Jerusalem was the capital of Israel and the center of Jewish religious and cultural life, their Roman oppressors chose to live elsewhere, about sixty miles to the west on the coast of the Mediterranean.

But, and here comes the second reason, during significant Jewish festivals, like the Passover which often stirred up so much ethnic pride that it would lead to rebellion, if not rioting, the Governor would ride in from the coast to remind everyone who was in charge. Under Pilate the Hebrew people were insignificant, powerless gnats in the vast hierarchy that was the Roman Empire. The people had beaten into them, with seemingly innocuous parades and undoubtedly much more insidious means, that they were losers and their lives, their stories, their opinions, were worth nothing. Rome is right and Rome is might and all you need to do is sit down and shut up. The people, just when they were about to celebrate that fateful night when they were released from bondage in Egypt so many generations before, the people were reminded that they lived in bondage yet again.”

<http://benrobertson.blogspot.com/2008/03/sermon-9-march-2008-palm-sunday.html>

(Borg, Marcus and Crossan, John Dominic, *The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus' Final Days in Jerusalem*, HarperOne, 2007).

Jesus is not a competing King among equal or lesser kings; Jesus Christ is the King of kings and Lord of lords. Rome is the usurper. They are only pawns, players in the Story of God. It is Jesus Christ who has every right to sit upon the unbroken foal and accept the misguided accolades of the gathering crowd. He has every right to make creation bow before Him in the cursing of the fig tree. He can make creation bend to His will and fulfill its calling. He has the authority to cleanse His Father's house. Since it is His Father's house, it is equally His. All who enter are guests and/or usurpers. Many have entered into the fold of the sheep without claim. “They have climbed up some other way, and they are thieves and robbers” (John 10:1). He is just in throwing them out. But now He rides in. The King must come, and it is fulfillment of His Father's will. He is doing the work to which He was called and for which He came (John 4:34; 17:4).

Even until the last, He extends the invitation to all who will to receive the offer of eternal life. It is there in Him and it is available to all who come. Now begins the final ascent on the thin aired heights of God's Mountainous cross. Now the Lamb will vicariously and voluntarily lay His life down for the sins of His people in obedience to the Father's will. May we sit in silence as we consider this sacred event.

Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.